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Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent. By Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015. 253. pp.

One of the most fashionable trends in scholarship today is research on the effects and effectiveness of humanitarian intervention. The subject is particularly popular among political scientists, scholars of international law, and philosophers. They tend to focus on events since 1990, and they usually regard humanitarian intervention as a phenomenon that began to become significant in the post-Cold War era. They generally search for the roots of concepts and practices of humanitarian intervention in legal and philosophical antecedents in Western European history and political thought, and instances of humanitarian intervention from earlier times are mentioned only as illustrations. The book by Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla constitutes a significant contribution to these discussions, in part because it examines the emergence of humanitarian intervention as concept and practice in the early nineteenth century and offers analyses of several case studies.

The first monograph to call attention to the possibility that research on the practical and theoretical aspects of humanitarian intervention in the nineteenth century could enrich our understanding of the phenomenon of humanitarian intervention today with new perspectives and precedents was authored by Davide Rodogno (*Against Massacre. Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914: The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice* [2012]). As Rodogno showed, post-Cold War instances of humanitarian intervention could be meaningfully compared with instances of humanitarian intervention that took place in the period between 1821 and 1918.

Heraclides and Dialla share many of Rodogno's views, and their book represents a continuation of his work. The chapters authored by Heraclides, a political scientist and scholar of international law with a thorough knowledge of nineteenth-century history, present the relevant events not through the eyes of a twenty-first century academic, but rather from the perspective of someone who lived at the time the events in question took place. Heraclides offers a subtle and critical presentation of the relevant schools of political thought and the various debates and representatives of conflicting viewpoints, and he puts his discussion in the context of the events at the time. Dialla is first and foremost a scholar of nineteenth-century Russian history. In her chapters, which draw first and foremost on Russian historiography, she focuses closely on the relationship between legal theory, foreign policy, and public opinion.

According to Heraclides and Dialla, the few people who are aware that humanitarian interventions have a rich array of clearly documentable antecedents in the period between 1821 and 1918 are hesitant to consider these antecedents as precedents. Heraclides contends that they make mention of the long nineteenth century first and foremost when seeking justifications in the past for contemporary doctrines (p.IX). In contrast with the few works that touch on the nineteenth century, Heraclides and Dialla note as a critical observation that, while scholars dealing with the question have recognized that the study of Orientalism and relations between the Ottoman Empire and the European great powers is particularly important to our understanding of the history of humanitarian interventions, they do not consider relations between the empires of Central Europe and the East. And last but not least, Heraclides emphasizes that, in its study of nineteenth-century humanitarian intervention, the research on the subject has neglected concepts and doctrines from contemporary international law (pp.X–XI).

The primary goal of the book is to use comparative tools to present the theoretical and practical aspects of humanitarian intervention in the nineteenth century. The chapters on the theoretical side of the subject consider philosophical axioms and relevant phases of the development of European law. They then present the views represented by experts on international law who dealt with the question, divided up into periods on the basis of the emergence and evolution of humanitarian intervention. Heraclides and Dialla link the chapters that approach the subject from the perspective of practice with a periodization that they establish on the basis of the evolution of international law. The relationship between the two (international law and humanitarian intervention as practice) is significant, since the introduction of legal measures regulating humanitarian intervention is inseparable from the study of concrete cases of humanitarian intervention.

Heraclides offers a clear presentation of how international law grew in part out of the ad hoc international regulations concerning humanitarian intervention. What we refer to as international law was hardly unified or homogenous in the nineteenth century. Numerous contradictions arose from the way in which the ad hoc regulations were contrived, one after the other. One of the signs of this lack of homogeneity is the simple fact that the very term humanitarian intervention only came to be used in a consistent manner in the languages of the various great powers in the early twentieth century (p.12). Heraclides and Dialla also note that the concept of international law was used in two different ways in communications among the great powers of Western Europe and in their dealings with the world beyond Europe. The manner in which international law shaped relations between Christian states was very different from the manner in which it shaped relations between Christian and non-Christian states (including the Ottoman Empire, Iran, China, and Japan). This difference gave the practice of humanitarian intervention a distinctive legal background.

Heraclides and Dialla deserve praise for having included both Russia and the United States in their discussion, alongside the empires of Asia. It is also worth noting that in their five case studies from the nineteenth century (the Greek War of Independence in 1821–32, the French intervention in Lebanon and Syria in 1860–61, the Bulgarian atrocities in 1875–78, the Balkan crises of 1878, and the Cuban War of Independence in 1895–1898) they treat national histories with a critical eye and at times raise questions and offer interpretations from the perspectives of the Muslim world. The ideas with which the individual chapters conclude are based on a consistent set of perspectives, thus making the events which took place in Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Bulgaria, and Cuba understandable in a comparative context for a lay-reader.

One could make the critical observation that the book is not based on the nineteenth-century great power system. Fundamentally, the site of humanitarian interventions at the time was the Ottoman East. It is difficult to understand why the authors make virtually no mention of the Habsburg Empire when at the same time they offer detailed analyses of the Western European and American responses (from the perspectives of politics, public opinion, and international law). In the discussion of the Eastern Crisis (1875–78), for instance, they examine the reactions of the United States, but Austria-Hungary, which was one of the main players in the events, is given only passing mention. One has the impression that a double standard is being applied: the topic is being discussed almost exclusively from the perspective of the states that would later emerge as the great powers of the twenty-first century.

This is true of several legal phenomena as well. Since Western Europe in the nineteenth century did not consider capitulations to the Muslim world and the cult protectorates that were based on these capitulations part of international law, Heraclides and Dialla also do not consider them part of international law. However, both Russia and Austria-Hungary did, in large part because for them the Ottoman Empire was not a distant world somewhere beyond the seas, but rather a great power with which they had essentially shared a border for three

centuries and a state with which they had had to find an everyday *modus vivendi*, much as they had had to do with the states of Western Europe.

Sadly, the book is of acute relevance today, at a time when, amidst the ruins of states that have crumbled, humanitarian crises have broken out the world over. The book will be of interest not only to scholars of Ottoman history and international relations in the nineteenth century, but also to politicians and experts dealing with humanitarian intervention as both a concept and practice.